3: Roberts S-4 (no date)1951 EDl Rumania EDl

but only by a new and popular force united around a man representing the "principle of discipline." [4] This yearning after discipline and order usually manifested itself in all parties when once they came to power, but was especially noticeable in those men or groups who were in office, not through the operation of the electoral system—however unreliable it may have been—but through some special circumstance. General Radescu, who was Prime Minister in the winter of 1944–45, was the last and most pathetic example. This call for discipline was an attempt to compensate for Rumania's underlying political instability. In most instances it was directed against the Left and the doctrine of class warfare.

Elections were held in May, 1920, and produced, not unexpectedly, a resounding success for Averescu's party, which obtained 209 out of 369 seats in the chamber. Averescu had made an electoral pact with Take Ionescu and had been joined by a splinter group of Transylvanians under the poet and subsequent fascist, Octavian Goga. He was also supported by a number of Conservatives and Liberals who, it was unkindly observed, felt the need of finding new bottles for their old wine. There is also evidence, however, that he did attract a fairly large popular vote from the peasants.[5] The new cabinet included Take Ionescu as Foreign Minister, and Nicolae Titulescu, well known later in the League of Nations, as Minister of Finance. The Conservative landowner Constantin Garofiid was Minister of Agriculture and Domains, and the sinister and cynical Constantin Argetoianu, an accomplished election manipulator, was Minister of the Interior. The position of the National Liberal party at this time is not altogether clear. While Averescu had attacked the Liberals, they were willing to accept his election. Doubtless they were not reluctant to stay in the background until the storms of popular discontent had been subdued.

The two principal actions of the Averescu government were the agrarian reform law of 1921, already discussed, and the suppression of Left-wing activity. In October, 1920, an abortive general strike was crushed, and the socialists who had voted for affiliation with the Third International arrested.[6] Tension aroused by the general strike and its suppression was augmented by a bomb explosion in the Ru-

4. *Ibid.*, p. 18. The position of some of the men in Averescu's group, notably Manoilescu, came to be known as neoliberalism and provided a transition from the policy of the old Liberals to the leading ideas of the Carolist period.

5. Mihalache admitted as much, saying that in 1919 a great many peasants had confused General Averescu with the Peasant party and thought that he was working with the peasants against the landlords. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

6. For further discussion of socialist activities at this time see below, pp. 246–247.

3: Roberts S-4 (no date)1951 EDl Rumania EDl

manian senate on December 9, 1920, which killed several persons and led to a temporary state of siege in Bucarest. This type of violence was less characteristic of Rumanian than of Bulgarian or Serbian political life, but was a foreshadowing of the political degeneracy of the 1930's.

Having served his purpose as man of the hour, Averescu's position gradually deteriorated in 1921, partly because of blunders in the cabinet but largely because the various groups which had installed him now deserted and turned against him. The Liberals, who had accepted him, withdrew their support and retired from parliament, on the rather disingenuous grounds that the government was not representative and had mishandled the Liberals' land reform. Whatever the occasion, it was apparent that with the passing of the postwar turmoil the Liberals were prepared to resume their traditional leadership. General Averescu resigned on December 17, 1921. Take Ionescu attempted to form a cabinet but failed to obtain a vote of confidence. On January 19, Ion I. C. Brătianu took over the government.

With the exception of an interlude between March, 1926, and June, 1927, the Liberals were in office from 1922 to 1928. They retained a hold on the key administrative and financial posts and exerted a decisive influence over King Ferdinand in his last years. Perhaps their strongest bulwark was the dominating personality of Ion I. C. Brătianu. This masterful old politician, who had fought stubbornly throughout the war and the peace negotiations for the realization of Greater Rumania, ruled his party and the country in an arbitrary patrician manner, and until his death the Liberals were firmly established.

On the other hand, there is little evidence that they commanded extensive popular support during these years, practically none outside the Old Kingdom. Part of their success lay in the failure of the other parties to create or maintain a united and effective opposition. Although the Liberals did resort to crude electoral manipulations and to repressive police measures, usually in connection with periodic Communist scares, they were still an old-fashioned party and had not developed these procedures to the unhappy perfection now so familiar.[1] Under sufficient pressure they preferred to retire rather than to overthrow the constitution. But it required several years for the National party of Transylvania and the Peasant party of the Old Kingdom to form the consolidated opposition which ultimately dislodged them.

1. A somewhat sensational glimpse of the dark side of the Liberal administration is given in C. G. Costa-Foru's *Aus den Polizeikammern Bukarests* (Vienna, 1928), an exposé of the terrorist methods employed by the Rumanian secret police, the *Siguranja*.

still abroad, was summarily dismissed. Peasant risings, a movement for autonomy in Transylvania, and general instability led to the nomination of General Averescu to office, owing to the reputation he enjoyed of being a strong man, having taken an active part in suppressing the peasant rising of 1907.

General Averescu's government passed the enactment dealing with the distribution of land to the peasants, while his Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Take Jonescu, laid the foundation of the Little Entente by concluding alliances with Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. General Averescu attempted to open pourparlers with Russia, so as to prepare the recognition of Rumania's right to Bessarabia, and there was a fair chance of his succeeding, but he was baulked of his aim, for the King vetoed his plan.

To M. Titulescu was assigned the task of reorganizing the country's finances. This was deemed to be an intrusion into the special domain of the Bratianus,[1] and so by provoking their hostility, brought about Averescu's downfall. M. Take Jonescu was his successor, but he was able to maintain himself in office only for a month. A government constituted by the Bratianu party followed in January, 1922, and remained in power until March, 1926. Owing to the disunion among the Opposition groups the Bratianu party was allowed to carry into effect its nefarious project of securing complete control of the economic resources of Rumania. The whole legislation passed during its tenure of office was of a purely economic character, and under the pretext of consolidating the finances of the country they merely consolidated their own financial dominance.

Popular dissatisfaction was steadily growing in the meanwhile, as instead of relieving the money stringency, the economic policy of the government did nothing but intensify the evil from which the country was suffering. On the other hand the Opposition was closing its ranks and organizing mass demonstrations throughout the country. A monster meeting of peasants was held at Alba-Julia in May, 1925, followed up by vigorous onslaughts against the government. The latter, unable to obtain a foreign loan which would have enabled it to stabilize the currency and relieve

[1] The Liberal Party, headed by John Bratianu.--Analyst